

28 MAY 1954

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

AIR

2003

INL-A- 1756

~~SECRET~~  
PRESIDENT/RYBAT

Acting Chief of Station, Guatemala

LINCOLN

INFO: Acting Chief of Station,

Acting Chief of Station,

PBSUC JESS, Headquarters

KUCOAN

SHERWOOD; script "Communists and religion".

We are forwarding herewith another SHERWOOD script. Like the preceding ones, it is for your personal information and guidance only and must not be shown to any agent. Subject script deals again with the question "Communists and religion", one of the most important themes in our propaganda campaign which should be suitably handled through all appropriate media, continuously and with all possible emphasis.

[ J  
JEROMIA/ JINBAR

Attachment

JCD/HFL/a

28 May 1954

Distribution:

- 2 - GUAT (w/att)
- 2 - C J (w/att)
- 2 - C J (w/att)
- 2 - WASH (w/att)
- 5 - LINC (w/att)

~~SECRET~~  
PRESIDENT/RYBAT

COMMUNISTS AND RELIGION -- IN GUATEMALA AND IN RUSSIA.

We know very well that our domestic communists, like communists everywhere, are atheists and bent upon the destruction of all religion. However, here in our country, communists know equally well that the overwhelming majority of our fellow-citizens are faithful Catholics: the communists therefore try to avoid the religious issue as much as possible. Occasionally, they show their true attitude towards the Church -- for instance, when they attack Archbishop Arellano viciously for his courageous Pastoral Letter, calling him a reactionary and reproaching him for "meddling with politics"; on the whole, however, they prefer to talk about something else altogether.

We have just received documentary evidence how the overlords of our domestic communists, the communists in the Soviet Union, are still treating the questions of religion and Church -- in the uncompromising atheistic spirit which has guided the communists ever since LENIN, back in 1906, proclaimed in his pamphlet "Socialism and Religion" the phrases which have since become so notorious:

"Religion is the opium of the people. Religion is the kind of spiritual vodka in which the slaves of capital drown their human shape and their claims to any decent life."

We shall read to you today from some articles which have appeared in the KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA ("The Truth of the Communist Youth League"), the daily newspaper of the Communist Youth League of the Soviet Union, an organization with about 16 million members, the most active mass organization under the orders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We shall ask all communists and communists sympathizers in Guatemala whether they agree with the atheistic views expressed in these articles or whether they dare to disagree with the voice of authority from the Kremlin, as stated in these articles. We are also asking all our fellow-countrymen

to confront any communist or Arbencista among their neighbors with this evidence of militant atheism and to ask them to take a clear-cut unambiguous stand: for religion or for communism, for Guatemala or for Moscow!

Communists often try to avoid a discussion on religion by declaring hypocritically that religion is a private affair. LENIN, however, in his above quoted pamphlet on "Socialism and Religion", has already emphatically stated that his party will never acknowledge religion as a private affair. He wrote:

"We demand that religion should be a private affair as far as the state is concerned, but under no circumstances can we regard religion as a private affair as far as our own party is concerned."

Having thus blocked the easiest exit by which communists like to escape this dilemma, we turn to the first of the articles which appeared in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA of 10 August 1952, entitled "Religious prejudice -- enemy of science", actually a revival of the old freethinkers' bogey that religion is allegedly contrary to science. The article states notably:

"No ideas are so incompatible as those of science and religion. Scientific and religious ideas are basic opposites and irreconcilable enemies. Comrade Stalin says "... religious prejudices are against science, because in some form every religion is the antithesis of science.... Religion, however, repudiates experience and evidence. Religion, since it serves the interests of the exploiting classes, pervertedly explains the world around us, casts humanity backward, and sentences it to impotence before the forces of nature and to helplessness in the face of its oppressors. Religion is not interested in scientific progress, since each discovery deals it a blow.

In a class society religion is the prop of the ruling classes. In a class

society the roots of religion are chiefly social; the impotence of the exploited in their struggle against their exploiters is largely illusory. The masses in their bondage seek solace and forgetfulness in religion, as if it were opium. Religion inculcates in the workers passivity, humility, resignation to their fate, and patience, and diverts them from battling their oppressors, and also from fighting for real happiness on earth."

The article, after elaborating on the above points, then continues to explain that dialectical materialism, that is, the philosophy of the communists, is entirely irreconcilable with idealism and religion. It says:

"... Dialectical materialism is an implacable enemy of the religious idea of the world and of idealistic philosophy....

.... Religion degrades science, knowledge, and the human mind. Dialectical materialism teaches that there is nothing incomprehensible on earth, but only things which have not as yet become known, but will be clarified and known in the future through the forces of science and experience."

After mentioning some scientific discoveries as alleged proof for these blasphemous assertions, the article comes to the following conclusions:

"... In a socialist society, where the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, where the communal ownership of productive resources prevails, and the national economy is conducted according to plan, conditions exist for the complete conquest of religion.

... In Soviet society the social roots of religion are destroyed,...

... Religion, even in Soviet society, remains an anti-scientific, reactionary ideology, which litters the minds of the faithful with incorrect, fraudulent ideas in regard to the world about them, and is an obstacle to their cultural and political development. Whereas Marxist-Leninist ideology fosters in the

Soviet man everything new and progressive, religion teaches him to bow down before the old, the outworn....

.... The war against religious vestiges is the war for the new man, the war for Communism."

Now, after this brief look at the errors of communist theory, let us give you some example how communist hatred of religion works in daily practice. We have here another article from the KOMSOBOLSKAYA PRAVDA, dated 28 November 1952 and entitled "A Church Wedding and Komsomol Propaganda Work". It first describes with violent expressions of abhorrence a Church wedding in the Russian town of Staro Maryevka in which not only the bride was a member of the Communist Youth League, but among the bridesmaids was the secretary of the local committee of young communist teachers and the district secretary of the Communist Youth League, too. After denouncing all participants in the ceremony by name, the article turns to the disciplinary measures taken but criticizes the entire district organization of the Communist Youth League as well. Listen, how the communist youth newspaper condemns those who were careless enough to allow a church wedding to take place:

"... What happened in Staro-Maryevka is primarily the result of an incorrect, shallow and careless attitude to ideological work on the part of the district's Komsomol organizations.

The district committee officials have regarded administrative measures as the most effective way to combat survivals from the past such as religion. When checking at the bureau the decisions of the primary units which had examined the dossiers of the Komsomol members who participated in the religious ceremony, the district officials did not notice the failure to mention those educational measures which Komsomol organizations must take to prevent any repetition of such acts in the future.

The district committee might have been expected to have corrected this error

in its decisions and to have pointed out to the Komsomol organizations the need for systematically propagandizing knowledge of the natural sciences among young people. But there was no mention of this in the district committee bureau's decisions, which were all written as though carbon paper had been used. "Expel Komsomol member Ksenya Kultseva and Komsomol member Maria Zadova from the Komsomol for participation in a religious ceremony," "Severely reprimand Komsomol member Lydia Popova" a simple enumeration of facts and no conclusions.

This was no accident. The Staro Maryevka District Komsomol Committee does not consider antireligious and scientific propaganda to be its business. Throughout this year, neither the lecture group nor the staff officials nor the district Komsomol committee members have delivered a single lecture or given a single report in the district on antireligious or scientific themes.

The district committee has not used the printed lectures and popular pamphlets available in the rural clubs, reading rooms and libraries to help young people to form a materialist outlook. There are more than 50 such pamphlets on the library shelves in Nadezhdinskoye Village. Among them are pamphlets with such interesting titles as: "Was There a Beginning and Will There Be an End to the World?" "How Is the Universe Organized?" "The Beginning of Life on Earth," "Unusual Celestial Phenomena," "Religious Superstitions and Their Origins" and many others.

We asked Anna Komarova, who is in charge of the library, "Why are these pamphlets covered with dust?"

"Nobody takes them," replied Komarova imperturbably.

"Have you ever tried taking them to the field camps and to the homes of the collective farm workers?"

"No, I never thought of that."

It came to light in the conversation that Comrade Komarova had not even read them herself.

District Komsomol officials have often visited Komarova at the library, but none of them have suggested to the librarian how literature on natural science should be propagandized among the people.

Propagandizing natural science among young people, forming an advanced, materialistic outlook in the rising generation and combating every type of superstition and religious belief make up a most important sector in the fight for the communist education of youth. Officials of the Staro Maryevka district Komsomol Committee have forgotten this and are now reaping the bitter harvest."

The venomous article which we have just finished reading to you illustrates graphically what would happen to church ceremonies in our country, to holy mass or weddings, baptisms or funerals, if we would permit the communists to stabilize their hold on our government. We shall complete our little selection of evidence for communist atheism by quoting a few passages from a third article in the KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, entitled "Against Superstitions and Prejudices" and published on 25 April, 1951. This article purports to have been written in reply to readers' inquiries and states the aggressive character of the communist fight against God and religion in the following blunt terms:

"... Religion cannot help hindering the building of communism, for it represents an antiscientific, reactionary ideology. Religion gives a fantastic, false and perverted idea of nature and society; its views on our environment contradict the true state of affairs, the indisputable facts of science and the vital experience of human practice. Religion prevents man from understanding the laws of the development of nature and society, educates him in a spirit of humility and submissiveness, inspires him with a blind faith in divine providence. Religion thereby distracts man from revolutionary change, instills in the masses the idea of the impossibility of changing an order of life alleged to have been established by God... ..

.... "The Party cannot be neutral in relation to religion," Comrade Stalin has explained, "and it carries on antireligious propaganda against all and any religious prejudice because it stands for science, while religious prejudice goes against science, for any religion is diametrically opposed to science."

The Party, as has been pointed out time and again by Lenin and Stalin, combats religion by the only correct, ideological means-educational work, conviction, elucidation, wide-scale propaganda of political and scientific knowledge. This work must be carried on without offending the feelings of those who believe; the reactionary and antiscientific essence of religious ideas must be patiently and convincingly explained to them.

.... Assisting the Party in the communist education of young people, the Young Communist League is expected to fight to overcome survivals of the past in the minds of the young, including religious survivals. This work must not be carried out as a campaign, but day in and day out, purposefully and persistently. Popular science lectures and reports on the structure of the universe, on the origin of life on earth, on the origin of man and other themes should be given for young people, the achievements of Soviet science and technology should be widely publicized, meetings arranged with scientists and specialists, popular science literature disseminated. Boys and girls should be told of the harmfulness of religious prejudices; a scientific, materialist outlook should be fostered in them....

.... The question of the attitude of the Y.C.L. member to religion must be decided with full strictness and principle. The Y.C.L. bylaws oblige a Y.C.L. member to struggle against the remnants of religious prejudices. Belief in God and participation in church ceremonies are incompatible with membership in the



Y.C.L. There can be no compromises here. The Y.C.L. member is an advanced, cultured person, free from prejudices and superstitions, and his task is to wage an irreconcilable struggle against survivals of the past and for Bolshevik education of vigorous and high-spirited young builders of communism."

Can you still have any doubts as to where communism stands with regard to religion, after you have heard these verbatim translations from the official newspaper in Moscow which speaks for 16 million young communists? Can you still believe the lie that communism is "neutral" towards religion? Obviously, you cannot. The evidence which we presented to you today reaffirms the message which was addressed last month to all of us by Archbishop Arellano in his Pastoral Letter: it is the duty of every Catholic, of every Christian believer to participate with all his strength in the fight against Godless communism.

The time has come for every fellow-citizen to declare solemnly and without equivocation where he stands: on the side of God and his Church -- or on the side of Moscow and its servants like Arbenz, Fortuny, and the rest of the communist clique who rule our country today: there is no middle ground.

.....  
-----